At the end of the Statement, it is also mentioned :

> "Negotations between India and Russia on the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project are yet to be completed."

Already nine years have elapsed. India is short of power. In view of the urgency, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he had any discussions with them? What are the causes of the delay of nine years? When are then likely to complete these projects?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, it might sound cynical for him to say that nine years have elapsed. Out of those nine years, for five years, my hon. colleague was dealing with the subject.

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Sir, is this the answer?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : But the fact remains that the original Agreement was signed with the Soviet Union in 1988. Then, the Soviet Union collapsed. Therefore, the talks were again initiated when Mr. Yeltsin came here in 1993. From 1993 to 1995, different clauses were again examined. When I went to Moscow recently, the idea was reactivated. Now, we are discussing and negotiating with them various clauses regarding financial backing of this subject.

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Sir, while giving details of his visit to Moscow, he has stated Indo-Russian relations as partnership of strategic cooperation based on shared interests. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the strategic partnership and shared interest between the two countries?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : I have confined myself to this question under the strategic partnership. I am confining myself to this question to say that this is one of the very unique agreements which really does not bind the Russians by any law with a change subsequently internally or internationally. But there is a safeguard in our favour. At the moment, we have a DPR to be negotiated and the Cabinet, I think, would be examining this in the near future.

During my stay in Moscow, the First Deputy Prime Minister was very keen that this should go ahead. It is a very large project and is costing approximately about Rs. 14,000 crore. Therefore, naturally various dimensions have to be examined.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, my question is of a little technical nature and could have been put to the Department of Atomic Energy. But it involves a policy matter also which has to be dealt with by the Foreign Ministry. So I am putting it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The erstwhile Soviet Union was willing to cooperate with India in developing fusion technology. My impression is, the present Russian Government is also willing to cooperate with India in developing fusion technology. The fusion technology is one of the most advanced technologies which can help any country to generate power. Now, if the present Government in Russia is willing to cooperate with India to develop fusion technology, what would be the stand of the Indian Government on this point?

I was told that even the American scientists are working with the Russian scientists to develop this technology. They have three tocomarks-Tocomark I, Tocomark II and Tocomark III. They are using it to develop this technology. This depends on the attitude taken and the policy made by the two Governments more than the technology itself.

So, I would like to request the Minister of Foreign Affairs to respond, if he can and if he is willing to.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, it is not a question of willingness. It is a question of knowledge. Since I am not an expert on this subject, I do not have data available with me. But I assure the hon. Member that I take his point very seriously and I will check up on this point.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Mr. Speaker Sir, I would seek a clarification from the hon. Minister. Is it not correct that since 1988, the Cooperation Agreement has remained unimplemented because our Department of Atomic Energy did not find favour with the Agreement on the grounds of the fact that such an agreement of supply of nuclear power reactor or power supply to India will retard indigenous efforts by the Indian scientists and by our Department of Atomic Energy?

May I also know from the hon. Minister, has the proposed scheme, now re-energised, been fully discussed with the Department of Atomic Energy or is the earlier objection of the Department of Atomic Energy now no longer valid or is the question of indigenous efforts by our Department now completely placed on the shelf or is this a part of the overall effort of somehow revitalising 10,000 MW by 2000 AD?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I might assure my hon. friend that the Department of Atomic Energy is fully involved in this. We have been told by that Department that this particular type of technology for setting up of such high capacity, that is, 1,000 MW, is not available with them.

As a matter of fact, our Department of Atomic Energy is very keen that we acquire this technology because they feel that this is a window of opportunity which was must utilise.

[Translation]

Funds for Removal of Illiteracy

*206. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have decided to provide hundred per cent grant to educationally backward States like Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to introduce any new schemes during 1997-98 for the removal of illiteracy in these States so that the target of full literacy would be attained by the year 2005; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The Government have taken up in hand a time-bound programme aimed at eradication of illiteracy by the year 2005 A.D. The implementation of this programme is done through Zilla Saksharata Samitis who chalk up area-specific, time-bound, outcome-oriented, volunteer-based programmes to achieve total literacy. National Literacy Mission and State Literacy Mission authorities provide the necessary direction and support to the programme. The programme is run on a collaborative basis under which the expenditure is shared by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 2:1. In tribal districts, the corresponding cost-sharing ratio is 4:1.

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have raised a question about Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan as these are educationally very backward states. Has the Union Government made any promise to provide 100 percent grants to these states? What measure the hon. Minister intend to take to provide free of charge education in these states?

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, so far as aid is concerned, the Government has not taken any decision to completely fund education in these three States. The general policy of the Government to have universal education applies to the States and special assistance is given to Bihar particularly. The World Bank aid is there. Bihar is the most backward State in Hindi-belt. Uttar Pradesh has been almost covered. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have been covered, but Bihar is the most backward State still. We are trying to intensify the literacy programme in these States.

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Hon. Speaker, Sir, it has been stated in his reply that the expenditure of the literacy Mission is share by the Union Goverment and the State Government in 2:1 ratio. The Union Government is running the Literacy Mission, however the fact is that in no part of the country any permanent programme is being carried out to eradicate illiteracy and to achieve the target of full literacy by 2005. I would like to know as to what kind of programmes are being mooted to eradicate illiteracy and how is the Government going to achieve the target of full literacy?

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, in the month of July, there was a meeting of the Chief Ministers of the country wherein seven minimum needs programme was adopted, one of which was to achieve full literacy by the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan. It has been endorsed by all the Chief Ministers. Thereafter, I had a meeting with the Education Ministers, Education Officers and experts in the country and we came to the conclusion to have a Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State in the Department of Education in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shri Saikiaji. Eleven State Ministers were also there in the Committee and after deliberations for six months they submitted a report last month. They have made a number of proposals to achieve universal education. They have also said that we require a sum of Rs. 40,000 crore to achieve this objective and that so many schools, so many teachers and teaching materials are required. They have given a report. I am taking it to the Cabinet.

Also we have written to the Chief Ministers. After hearing their views, we will take a decision in that matter.

[Translation]

SHRI ILIAS AZMI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister that has he not received such reports through Parliament and there sources to the effect that 90-95 percent funds meant for the Literacy Mission goes into the pockets of the officers and the staff. Apart from printing monograms of Mission on the walls. Have you found a single person in the country who became literate through Literacy Mission.

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, I do not completely agree with the hon. Member. There are instances where for only namesake a district is declared fully literate. But there are States and districts where they have achieved it, partially achieved and partially not achieved. Therefore, we are thinking of a different policy. We have to revise the entire policy.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister in his speech a few days back stated that Bihar is the most backward state and today the Minister for Human Resource Department is also stating that Bihar is a backward state. We have also demands on many occasions that Bihar should be given special assistance to combat its backwardness. Shri Shatrughan Prasad Singh also just raised a deal question, he has also talked above Bihar and has asked whether the Government intends to give 100 percent grants to Bihar,

Orissa and Rajasthan for this work and the Minister has replied that the Union Government and the State Governments bear expenditure on this work in 2:1 ratio. Hon. Speaker, Sir, in the recent report of C.A.G. it is clearly written that the money given to Bihar Government under this head by Government of India has been cent percent diverted to other heads. When this amount has been misutilised in other heads by the Bihar Government, I would like to know whether this fact has been brought to the notice of Hon. Minister and whether hon. Minister wants to give cent-percent grant to Bihar state to get rid of the financial constraints?

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I have not received the C & AG's report. After receiving it, I will go through it and take necessary action. I will write to the State Government for necessary action.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister this thing? I have gone through a small book written by Planning Commission where they have said that allocation to the education sector of GNP or GDP ratio is much higher in our country compared to other developing countries including China. The allocation is higher, but the literacy rate going up is much lower than other countries. Is it that the money is being spent more on infrastructure, or is it that the money is again being misused in some other form? Because if we see the allocation which is higher, then the rate must also go higher. What is Government's view on this subject?

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : The most important reason is the increase in the growth of population. China has reduced its population for the last 20 years. That is the main reason...*(Interruptions)* The population growth rate is coming down in China. We will be having a population of more than China by the end of this century. That is one reason. As you say, in some cases, the money is not properly utilised also. I must admit it. The State Governments are not coming forward to contribute their share. Unless there is a proper coordination among the States, the Centre, NGOs, the voluntary organizations and the Panchayats, we will not be able to do full justice. Why is it successful in Kerala and in most of the Southern States? Why is there failure in the Hindi belt only? It is because of the general awakening, voluntary organization, social reform as well as cooperation between the States and the Central Government which is necessary. Therefore, I am rethinking as to what to do. This Committee has given certain proposals. I am placing it before the Cabinet.

Trade Treaty Between India and Nepal

*207. SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the salient features of Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty which has been renewed recently;

(b) whether as a result of the trade treaty, free entry for Nepalese export is allowed; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The three main features of the Treaty are :

(i) removal of material content requirement for duty free entry of Nepalese articles into India;

(ii) rationalisation of countervailing duty structure in respect of Nepalese goods manufactured in small scale units; and

(iii) provision of automatic renewal of the Treaty after 5 December, 2001, for further period (s) of five years.

Articles of Nepalese manufacture except alcoholic liquor, perfumes and cosmetics of non-Nepalese/non-Indian brands and cigarettes/tobacco, will be allowed preferential entry into India.

Nepal has been having a trade deficit with India for a long time. The agreed changes would increase bilateral trade, offer a chance for achieving a greater trade balance, as well as enable Nepal, a close and friendly neighbouring country, to offer a greater range of articles of Nepalese manufacture.

[Translation]

SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to say that under the new trade agreement between India and Nepal, the Government of India has allowed duty free entry of goods imported from Nepal. So, I would like to know whether Nepal has also allowed duty free entry of Indian goods in Nepal?

[English]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : The new agreement that the Government of India and the Government of Nepal have signed gives considerable concessions to the Government of Nepal and this is a part of our policy. So far as Indian goods going to Nepal are concerned, I will not be able to give the details just now and I will need notice for it.

[Translation]

SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that besides Nepalese goods, the goods of other countries can also be imported to India in the name of Nepal. I would like to ask whether Indian Government have made any provision to check such things?